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II.—TENNYSON AND HOMER.

The most casual reader of Tennyson's poems must often be struck by the frequency of his allusions to classical literature and mythology, and by the frequency of his use of what is essentially classical language or idiom. The influence of Homer or Theocritus, of Virgil or Horace, may be traced upon many of his pages, and he that has eyes to see may often light upon interesting parallels even in quite remote corners of the classical field. Perhaps no English poet since Milton has kept so close to the diction of the great Greek and Roman models.

In the 'Specimen of a Translation of the Iliad in Blank Verse' and in his 'Achilles over the Trench,' Tennyson has given us two of his favorite Homeric passages: Il. VIII 542-61, XVIII 202-31. The Memoir (II 15) records his own spirited prose translation of another passage of the Iliad which he admired for its "beauty of poetic diction and feeling," the Parting of Paris, at the end of the sixth book. The single hexameters that he was fondest of quoting for their "strong-wing'd music" were Il. VII 422, or Od. XIX 434:

ἔξ ἀκαλαρρείταο βαθυρρόου Ὠκεανοῖο,

and Il. I 34:

βῆ δ' ἄκέων παρὰ θίνα πολυφλοίσβοιο θαλάσσης.

And he once remarked upon the fine effect of the monotonous ending of words in *-ων* at the beginning of Il. XIII (Memoir, II 215).

Among the "choice paintings of wise men" which adorned the royal dais of 'The Palace of Art' were those of Milton, and Shakespeare, and Dante,

"And there the Ionian father of the rest;
A million wrinkles carved his chin;
A hundred winters snow'd upon his breast,
From cheek and throat and chin."

In the lines 'On Translations of Homer' we have the familiar protest against all attempts to give the Iliad in English hexameters:

"These lame hexameters the strong-wing'd music of Homer
No—but a most burlesque barbarous experiment."

In that wonderful university lecture which is reported in the second part of 'The Princess' we are reminded that

"The highest is the measure of the man,
And not the Kaffir, Hottentot, Malay,
Nor those horn-handed breakers of the glebe,
But Homer, Plato, Verulam."

And in the poem 'Parnassus' we are told that the fire within a true poet would never falter:

"Let the golden Iliad vanish, Homer here is Homer there."

In some of his poems which deal with distinctly classical subjects, Tennyson's language is almost of necessity indebted to Homer. In the opening lines of the poem 'Oenone,'

"Behind the valley topmost Gargarus
Stands up and takes the morning,"

we have a reminiscence of the γάργαραν ἄκρον of Il. XIV 292, XV 152. The "many-fountain'd Ida" of the same poem is a stock Homeric phrase, Ἰδη πολυπίδαξ; e. g. Il. XIV 157, 283, 307. "Light-foot Iris," too, is Homeric, πόδας ὠκεία Ἴρις; cp. Il. XVIII 202:

"So saying, light-foot Iris pass'd away,"

as it runs in Tennyson's own translation. The "rosy slender fingers" of the Idalian Aphrodite are like those of the ῥοδοδάκτυλος Ἥως. And the "whirling Simois" may remind one of the "eddying," or "silver-eddying," or "deep-eddying" Xanthus, Il. XXI 2, 8, 15. The poem 'Ulysses' has, to be sure, "an echo of Dante in it" (Memoir, II 70), but some of the language is Homeric. In the splendid lines

"And drunk delight of battle with my peers
Far on the ringing plains of windy Troy,"

we may perhaps recognize the striking word χάρμη ("the stern joy which warriors feel"), which occurs, for example, four times in Il. XVII. In "windy Troy" we find another Homeric epithet, Ἰλιος ἡνεμέσσα; cp. Il. XII 115, XVIII 174, etc. And at the close of the poem,

"Push off, and sitting well in order smite
The sounding furrows,"

we have one of the recurrent lines of the *Odyssey* that gladden the schoolboy's heart :

ἐξῆς δ' ἐξόμενοι πολλὴν ἄλα τύπτον ἐρετμοῖς.

Tennyson's poem 'The Lotos-Eaters' is developed from Homer's brief story, *Od.* IX 94 :

τῶν δ' ὅς τις λωτοῖο φάγοι μέλιθ' ἑκά κάρπ' ὄν,
οὐκέτ' ἀπαγγεῖλαι πάλιν ἤθελεν οὐδὲ νέεσθαι,
ἀλλ' αὐτοῦ βούλοντο μετ' ἀνδράσι λωτοφάγοισι
λωτὸν ἐρεπτόμενοι μενέμεν νόστον τε λαθέσθαι.

And when the singers of the 'Choric Song,' who are, of course, part of the company of *Odysseus*, are heaping up reasons against their returning home :

"Or else the island princes over-bold
Have eat our substance, and the minstrel sings
Before them of the ten years' war in *Troy*,
And our great deeds, as half-forgotten things,"

their fancy is obviously due to *Od.* I 325 :

Τοῖσι δ' αἰδοὺς ἄειδε περικλυτὸς, οἳ δὲ σιωπῇ
εἶατ' ἀκούοντες· ὁ δ' Ἀχαιῶν νόστον ἄειδε
λυγρὸν, ὃν ἐκ *Trois* ἐπετείλατο Πάλλας Ἀθήνη.

The poem 'Demeter and Persephone' is based upon the story of *Demeter* in the fourth Homeric Hymn, with one or two details drawn from *Ovid*. The closing lines :

"and the shadowy warrior glide
Along the silent field of *Asphodel*,"

may be compared with *Od.* XI 538 :

ψυχὴ δὲ ποδώκεος Αἰακίδαο
φοῖτα μακρὰ βιβᾶσα κατ' ἀσφοδελὸν λειμῶνα.

The simile in 'The Death of *Oenone*' :

"She heard a wailing cry, that seem'd at first
Thin as the bat-like shrillings of the Dead
When driven to *Hades*,"

is borrowed from the beginning of *Od.* XXIV :

ὥς δ' ὅτε νυκτερίδες μυχῶ ἄντρον θεσπεσίῳ
τρίζουσαι ποτέονται,

ὥς αἱ τετριγυῖαι ἄμ' ἦσαν· ἦρχε δ' ἄρα σφιν
 'Ερμείας ἀκάκητα κατ' εὐρώεντα κέλευθα.

And a similar comparison is employed in 'The Voyage of Maeldune':

"Our voices were thinner and fainter than
 any flittermouse-shriek."

The passage in 'Tithonus':

"I wither slowly in thine arms,
 Here at the quiet limit of the world,"

is due to the story of Tithonus in the Hymn to Aphrodite, 227:

ναῖε παρ' Ὠκεανοῖο ῥοῆς ἐπὶ πείρασι γαίης.

And in the poem 'Lucretius':

"since he never sware,
 Except his wrath were wreak'd on wretched man,
 That he would only shine among the dead
 Hereafter; tales! for never yet on earth
 Could dead flesh creep, or bits of roasting ox
 Moan round the spit,"

we have an allusion to Od. XII 382 ff., the anger of Helios Hyperion at the slaughter of his cattle:

εἰ δέ μοι οὐ τίσουσσι βοῶν ἐπιεικέ' ἀμοιβήν,
 δύσομαι εἰς Αἶδαο καὶ ἐν νεκύεσσιν φαείνω.
 . . . τοῖσιν δ' αὐτίκ' ἔπειτα θεοὶ τέραα προῦφαινον·
 εἶρπον μὲν ῥινοὶ, κρέα δ' ἄμφ' ὀβελοῖσι μεμύκει,
 ὀπταλία τε καὶ ὤμά· βοῶν δ' ὥς γίγνεται φωνή.

There are a few other Homeric allusions in Tennyson that may be mentioned here. After the beautiful love-song in the fourth part of 'The Princess,'

"O Swallow, Swallow, flying, flying south," etc.,

the narrative continues:

"I ceased, and all the ladies, each at each,
 Like the Ithacensian suitors in old time,
 Stared with great eyes, and laugh'd with alien lips,
 And knew not what they meant."

The allusion is to the wooers of Penelope, Od. XX 347:

ὣς φάτο Τηλέμαχος· μνηστῆρσι δὲ Παλλὰς Ἀθήνη
 ἄσβεστον γέλω ὤρσε, παρέπλαγξεν δὲ νόημα.
 οἱ δ' ἤδη γναθμοῖσι γελοίων ἀλλοτρίοισιν, κ. τ. λ.

Horace has adapted the same Homeric expression, Sat. II 3, 72 *malis ridentem alienis*. There are two passages in 'The Princess' which allude to the adventures of Odysseus with the Sirens. When, in Part II, the three male intruders into the women's university are detected by the Lady Psyche, and are informed that the penalty of their intrusion is death, Florian jestingly asks

"who could think
The softer Adams of your Academe,
O sister, Sirens tho' they be, were such
As chanted on the bleaching bones of men?"

in allusion to Od. XII 44:

*ἀλλὰ τε Σειρῆνες λιγυρῇ θέλγουσιν ἀοιδῇ,
ἥμεναι ἐν λειμῶνι· πολὺς δ' ἀμφ' ὀστεόφιν θῖς
ἀνδρῶν πυθομένων, περὶ δὲ ῥινοὶ μινύθουσι.*

And at the close of the song in Part IV, the song of the "tears, idle tears," that rise in the heart and gather to the eyes in thinking of the days that are no more, the Princess herself answers, with some disdain:

"If indeed there haunt
About the moulder'd lodges of the Past
So sweet a voice and vague, fatal to men,
Well needs it we should cram our ears with wool
And so pace by,"

a remark which is obviously suggested by the story of Odysseus anointing the ears of his men with wax, and thus getting them safely past the Sirens and their sweet song. The line in 'Becket,' Act I, Sc. 2:

"Our woodland Circe that hath witch'd the King,"

refers to the fate of the comrades of Eurylochus, Od. X 237, and the reference in 'The Princess,' VII 147:

"lovelier in her mood
Than in her mould that other, when she came
From barren deeps to conquer all with love . . .
To meet her Graces, where they deck'd her out
For worship without end,"

takes us back to the story of Aphrodite in the fifth Homeric Hymn.

In the prologue to the 'Morte d'Arthur,' that poem is playfully described as one of the twelve books of a great epic of King Arthur—twelve books that were "faint Homeric echoes, nothing-

worth." That is to say, it is consciously and purposely Homeric. The stately opening lines:

"So all day long the noise of battle roll'd
Among the mountains by the winter sea,"

may be compared with such passages as Il. XVIII 209:

"All day the men contend in grievous war
From their own city,"

as Tennyson translates it in his 'Achilles over the Trench,' or Il. XVII 384:

*Toûs δὲ πανημερίους ἔριδος μέγα νεῖκος ὀρώρει
ἀργαλέης.*

The adverb 'lightly,' which occurs five times in the poem:

"Watch what thou seest, and lightly bring me word,"

"and lightly went that other to the King," etc., seems to represent the Homeric *ρίμφα* of Il. VI 511, X 54, etc. The words of Sir Bedivere:

"Not tho' I live three lives of mortal men,"

remind one of the aged Nestor, Il. I 250:

*τῷ δ' ἤδη δύο μὲν γενεαὶ μερόπων ἀνθρώπων
ἐφθίαθ', οἳ οἱ πρόσθεν ἅμα τράφεν ἦδ' ἐγένοντο
ἐν Πύλῳ ἡγαθέη, μετὰ δὲ τριτάτοισιν ἄνασσαν.*

The passage in the bold knight's soliloquy:

"So might some old man speak in the aftertime
To all the people, winning reverence,"

may be compared with such passages as Il. VI 459:

*καὶ ποτέ τις εἴπῃσιν ἰδὼν κατὰ δάκρυ χέουσαν·
"Ἐκτορος ἦδε γυνή,"*

or Il. VI 479:

*καὶ ποτέ τις εἴποι 'πατρός γ' ὅδε πολλὸν ἀμείνων'
ἐκ πολέμου ἀνιόντα.*

And the phrase "winning reverence" may recall the statement of Od. VIII 479:

*πᾶσι γὰρ ἀνθρώποισιν ἐπιχθονίοισιν αἰδοῖ
τιμῆς ἔμμοροί εἰσι καὶ αἰδοῦς.*

The words which describe Sir Bedivere flinging the brand Excalibur into the middle mere :

"And strongly wheel'd and threw it,"

and, a little below, "and flung him, wheeling him," may be likened to the ῥίψ' ἐπιδινήσας of Il. III 378, or the ἤκ' ἐπιδινήσας of Od. IX 538. A close verbal parallel is found in Virgil, Aen. V 642 *conixa coruscat et iacit*. The line

"Dry clash'd his harness in the icy caves,"

recalls the Homeric use of αὖον to describe a sound, Il. XII 160 :

κόρυθες δ' ἀμφ' αὖον αὖτευν
βαλλόμεναι μυλάκεσσι καὶ ἀσπίδες ὀμφαλόεσσαι,

or Il. XIII 441 :

δὴ τότε γ' αὖον αὖσεν ἐρεικόμενος περὶ δουρί.

And with this we may compare also

"the dry harsh roar of the great horn,"

in 'The Last Tournament'; the line in 'Geraint and Enid':

"And all in passion uttering a dry shriek";

and the line in 'The Voyage':

"Dry sang the tackle, sang the sail."

The description of the island valley of Avilion :

"Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow,
Nor ever wind blows loudly,"

is like the picture of Olympus, Od. VI 43 :

οὐτ' ἀνέμοισι τινάσσεται οὔτε ποτ' ὄμβρος
δέυεται οὔτε χιὼν ἐπιπίλναται,

or the picture of the Elysian plain, Od. IV 566 :

οὐ νιφετὸς, οὐτ' ἄρ' χειμῶν πολὺς οὔτε ποτ' ὄμβρος.

The place, moreover, is "deep-meadow'd," like the Ἀνθεια βαθύλειμος of Il. IX 151, and its

"bowery hollows crown'd with summer sea"

remind one of the island of Circe, Od. X 195 :

νῆσον, τὴν πέρι πόντος ἀπείριτος ἐστεφάνωται.

But the "faint Homeric echoes" of Tennyson are not confined to the 'Morte d'Arthur,' or to the poems on classical subjects. The picture in 'The Last Tournament' of the churl

"sputtering thro' the *hedge of splinter'd teeth*,"

contains the *ἔρκος ὁδόντων* of Il. IV 350, IX 409, etc. The lines in 'Love Thou Thy Land':

"To follow flying steps of Truth
Across the brazen *bridge of war*,"

repeat another familiar Homeric phrase; cp. Il. VIII 553:

Οἱ δὲ μέγα φρονέοντες ἐπὶ πτολέμοιο γεφύρας
ἦτο παννύχιοι,

or, in Tennyson's own version:

"And these all night upon the bridge of war
Sat glorying."

And with the phrase here translated by 'glorying,' or with the *κυδιόων* of Il. II 579, VI 509, we may compare the passage in 'Gareth and Lynette':

"And Gareth silent gazed upon the knight,
Who stood a moment ere his horse was brought,
Glorying."

The curious expression in 'The Princess,' I 64:

"then he chew'd
The thrice-turn'd cud of wrath, and *cook'd his spleen*,"

is adapted from the *χόλον πέσσειν*, or *καταπέσσειν*, of Il. I 81, IV 513. The line in 'The Princess,' IV 483:

"And clad in iron *burst the ranks of war*,"

may be compared with such lines of the Iliad as XI 90:

τῆμος σφῆ ἄρετῇ Δαναοὶ ῥήξαντο φάλαγγας,

VI 6, XI 538, or with Virgil, Aen. XII 683 *media agmina rumpit*. The figure in 'The Princess,' V 134:

"The lifting of whose eyelash is my lord,"

is developed from Il. I 528:

Ἦ καὶ κνανέησιν ἐπ' ὀφρύσι νεῦσε Κρονίων,

perhaps through Horace, Od. III 1, 8 *cuncta supercilio moventis*. The epithet in 'The Princess,' V 90:

"*Ill mother* that I was to leave her there,"

is Homeric: Od. XXIII 97:

μη̄τερ ἐμὴ, δύσμητερ, ἀπηνέα θυμὸν ἔχουσα.

The picture in 'The Coming of Arthur':

"And Gawain went, and bursting into song
Sprang out, and *follow'd by his flying hair*
Ran like a colt, and leapt at what he saw,"

seems to owe something to the Parting of Paris, Il. VI 506 ff.:
"And as when a stall-kept horse . . . dasheth through the plain
. . . *and his mane flieth back on either shoulder* . . .; so ran the
son of Priam, Paris, from the height of Pergamus, all in arms,
glittering like the sun, laughing for light-heartedness, and his
swift feet bare him." This is Tennyson's own translation of one
of his favorite passages (Memoir, II 15). The simile in the fifth
part of 'The Princess':

"And as the fiery Sirius alters hue,
And bickers into red and emerald, shone
Their morions, wash'd with morning, as they came,"

must have been consciously borrowed from Il. V 5:

ἀστέρ' ὀπωρινῷ ἐναλίγκιον, ὅς τε μάλιστα
λαμπρὸν πανφαίνῃσι λελούμενος Ὠκεανοῖο.

The repeated line in 'Dora':

"And the sun fell, and all the land was dark,"

sounds like an echo of the line that comes in like a refrain in the
Odyssey—twice in Bk. III, three times in Bk. XV—

δύσετό τ' ἥελιος σκιάωντό τε πᾶσαι ἀγυαί.

And the same Homeric description of nightfall is employed in
'The Talking Oak,' of the famous tree

"Wherein the younger Charles abode
Till *all the paths were dim*."

There are a few other passages which may be mentioned, not
as evidence of any direct or indirect indebtedness, but only as
interesting parallels. Some of them are, of course, mere common-
places of poetical rhetoric or imagery. The fancy in 'In Memo-
riam,' LXVIII:

"Sleep, Death's twin-brother,"

is as old as Il. XVI 672, 682 :

Ὕπνῳ καὶ Θανάτῳ διδυμάουσιν,

as the similar fancy in 'In Memoriam,' LXXI :

"Sleep, kinsman thou to death and trance,"

may be compared with Virgil's phrase, Aen. VI 278 :

consanguineus Leti Sopor.

The twilight scene in 'In Memoriam,' CXXI :

"The team is loosen'd from the wain," etc.,

reminds one of the βουλυντόνδε of Od. IX 58 ; Il. XVI 779. Compare also Horace, Od. III 6, 42 ; Milton, 'Comus,' 291. The unmeasured mirth aroused by the appearance of the bedraggled hero, in 'The Princess,' V 21 :

"And slain with laughter roll'd the gilded squire,"

may be compared with the delight of the heartless suitors at the cruel overthrow of the boxer Irus, Od. XVIII 100 :

χείρας ἀνασχόμενοι γέλῳ ἔκθανον.

The figure in 'In Memoriam,' CVIII :

"I will not shut me from my kind,
And, lest I stiffen into stone,
I will not eat my heart alone,"

has an ancient counterpart in the story of Bellerophon, Il. VI 202 :

ἦ τοι ὁ καὶ πεδίον τὸ Ἀλγῆιον οἶος ἀλᾶτο,
ὃν θυμὸν κατέδων, πάτον ἀνθρώπων ἀλεείνων,

cp. also Od. X 143, 379 ; Il. XXIV 129. In 'The Princess,' II 94, we have the Lady Psyche's babe :

"In shining draperies, headed like a star,
Her maiden babe, a double April old,"

to remind us of Il. VI 401 :

παῖδ' ἐπὶ κόλπῳ ἔχουσ' ἀταλάφρονα, νήπιον αὐτῶς,
Ἐκτορίδην ἀγαπητὸν, ἀλῖγκιον ἀστέρι καλῷ.

And in the sixth part of the same poem Tennyson gives us another simile of the same sort, in speaking of the same child :

"the babe that by us,
Half-lapt in glowing gauze and golden brede,
Lay like a new-fallen meteor on the grass."

The description of the Argive Helen, in 'A Dream of Fair Women':

"A daughter of the gods, divinely tall,
And most divinely fair,"

recalls the description of the goddess Artemis, in the first Homeric Hymn, 198:

μάλα μεγάλη τε ἰδεῖν καὶ εἶδος ἀγῆτῃ.

And the "long-sounding corridors" of 'The Palace of Art,' or the "sounding hall" of 'The Holy Grail,' may be likened to the αἶθουσα ἐρίδουπος of the Homeric dwelling: Od. XV 146, 191; III 399.

The lovely lines in 'The Lady of Shalott':

"Little breezes dusk and shiver
Thro' the wave that runs for ever,"

have been called an imitation of Virgil's "inhorruit unda tenebris," Aen. III 195, V 11. They have also served to illustrate Horace, Od. I 5, 6 aspera nigris aequora ventis. One who knows Tennyson's pictures of lake, and stream, and sea, may well hesitate to believe that this passage is an imitation at all; but if any ancient parallel be needed, or desired, we may as well go back to "the Ionian father of the rest," and compare the μέλαινα φρίξ of Il. XXI 126; Od. IV 402, or the simile in Il. VII 63:

οἷη δὲ Ζεφύροιο ἐχέυατο πόντον ἐπὶ φρίξ
ὀρτυμένοιο νέον, μελάνει δέ τε πόντος ὑπ' αὐτῆς.

HAVERFORD COLLEGE, *March 31, 1900.*

WILFRED P. MUSTARD.